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What is WV AgrAbility?

West Virginia AgrAbility is an employment program assisting farmers, their Families, and farm workers to find ways to continue farming after acquiring an illness, injury, or chronic health condition.

Who is Eligible?

AgrAbility services are provided free to any farmer, farm family member or farm worker who:

- has at least \$1,000.00 in sales per year
- has stated an illness or injury exists limiting farming endeavors
- is interested in starting an agri-business

Eligibility to participate is not limited to any specific type of farming, injury, health condition, or age.

West Virginia AgrAbility Services

Assistive Technology Focus



Photo (left) - Drip /Low Flow Irrigation System

Efficient AT Watering Systems

Using drip and low flow irrigation systems can be a time-saving measure for watering plants efficiently. It can also be a good watering method for a farmer or gardener who has lifting, reaching, or handling limitations. There are different watering kits available depending upon the nature of the area that needs to be watered—such as raised beds, deck gardens, gravity feed areas, hanging baskets, and row gardens. Lee Valley sells a variety of kits. Call them at 800-267-8767. An “Irrigation Design Guide” is on this website: www.leevalley.com.



Photo (left) Insulated / Energy Free Livestock Watering System

Some insulated, energy-free livestock water systems are designed to prevent algae growth in warm weather. The size of kit a farmer may need will depend on the size and amount of animals drinking from the water source. To find out more, you can call Miraco at 641-236-5822 or visit www.miraco.com

This Assistive Technology information was submitted by the West Virginia Assistive Technology System (WVATS), a project of the Center For Excellence in Disabilities at West Virginia University and a partner with WV AgrAbility. Call WVATS at 800-841-8436.

West Virginia AgrAbility — Recent Events

Awareness

Event: AT Demo—Marion County

- Apr. 10 - Fairmont, WV

WV AgrAbility staff spoke to approximately 50 Farm Bureau members from the Marion County Chapter about the purpose of WV AgrAbility and farm safety. During this session, various assistive technologies were demonstrated to farmers with disabilities, including AT solutions such as a bale wagon, an airwave helmet, a back boom, drive-through gates, and ergonomic tools.

Education

Event: Accessible Gardening/Children

- Apr. 14 - Fairmont, WV

WV AgrAbility staff discussed accessible gardening for children with disabilities at the Fairmont, WV Disability Action Center (DAC). The primary topics included, “How to Plant a Container Salad Garden with Lettuce, Radishes, Tomatoes, and Cucumbers” and “How to Make a Decoupage Rock Marker for Any Garden.”

WV AgrAbility Upcoming Events



Event
Farm Safety Day

Date
May 27, 2014
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Location
Reymann Memorial Farm
Wardensville, WV

Event Description
Area agencies and businesses are working to make the farm a safer place for all children by offering farm safety training for students in grades 8—11.

Sponsored by
The WVU Extension Service, WVU Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design-Division of Animal and Nutritional Sciences, Grant Memorial Hospital, Hardy County Farm Bureau, Agricultural Education Instructors at various high schools, and local businesses.

More Information
<http://farmsafetyday.com/>



Safe in the Sun

One area of compliance that OSHA inspectors zero in on is the written plan. Although many OSHA regulations require written plans, there are benefits to writing non-required plans, especially when it comes to heat illness prevention. Putting together a written plan detailing how the company will assess heat hazards, perform medical surveillance, implement control measures, handle various emergency situations, and train employees who risk exposure to extreme heat, will show OSHA and employees that the company has good intentions.

Benefits — First, a written heat illness prevention plan can define and direct an employer's safety and health efforts, and provide management and employees with safety and health goals and expectations, rules, standard procedures, as well as defined roles and responsibilities. If an OSHA inspection occurs, it is the employer's evidence of management concern for employee involvement with safety and health for work in hot temperatures, which can be important. Second, a written heat illness prevention plan can help an employer enforce its own safety rules in the workplace and avoid the possibility for confusion with the procedures that must be followed.

Source: Williams, S. (May 2014). *Industrial Safety and Hygiene News*, "Safe in the sun: Put your heat illness prevention plan in writing. Pgs. 1, 28-29.
URLs: www.ishn.com <http://digital.bnppmedia.com/publication/?i=207691&p=28>



Hydration Help

Summertime brings sweltering temperatures outside and dryness inside caused by the constant flow of air conditioning, so working anywhere during this season can cause fatigue and dehydration. However, summertime isn't the only time to be concerned about these ailments. Employees in construction, landscaping, laundry, factory, farm, or restaurant settings typically function in hot environments throughout the year so do workers who wear heavy protective apparel on the job, which causes them to sweat and lose the necessary water that the body stores. In addition to health and safety concerns, multiple studies show that even mild thirst can decrease productivity at work by as much as 10 percent; hand/eye coordination can weaken at just one percent dehydration. Therefore, it is essential to maintain proper hydration planning year round.

Know the warning signs — Employees need to know when they are at risk for heat illness, which can progress from hydration to heat exhaustion to heat stroke. Signs of dehydration are thirst and dry mouth, and can be corrected easily by drinking fluids with electrolyte solutions. Heat stroke can result in loss of balance and collapse.

Source: Schechter, M. (May 2014). *Industrial Safety and Hygiene News*, "Hydration help: Tips to keep workers safe, healthy, and productive. Pg. 30.
URLs: www.ishn.com <http://digital.bnppmedia.com/publication/?i=207691&p=28>



Safety Spotlight

Agricultural Safety

Agriculture ranks among the most hazardous industries. Farmers are at very high risk for fatal and nonfatal injuries. Farming is one of the few industries in which family members, who often share the work and live on the premises, are also at risk for fatal and nonfatal injuries.

Who's At Risk?

- Approximately 1,823,000 full-time workers were employed in production agriculture in the US in 2010.
- An estimated 1.03 million youth under 20 years of age resided on farms in 2009, with about 519,000 youth performing farm work. In addition to the youth who live on farms, an estimated 230,000 youth were hired to work on US farms in 2009.

For more information:
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/aginjury/>



WV 24th Annual Beef Expo



The WV 24th Annual Beef Expo was held in Weston, WV at the Jackson's Mill State 4-H Conference Center on April 10, 11, and 12. Approximately 350 Future Farmers of America (FFA) members and 4-Hers participated in the livestock and forage judging competitions. WV AgrAbility staff attended the event along with a display featuring AgrAbility and assistive technology solutions. The WV AgrAbility display includes a Farm Safety Board with 34 farm hazards to identify. It features descriptions of safe tasks for children to do on the farm.

Sarah Elizabeth Page, the 2014 West Virginia Beef Queen, and the Beef Expo planning committee invited the public to the 24th annual WV Beef Expo. An estimated 1,500 people were expected to visit the expo. The event gives the more than 100 registered cattlemen an opportunity to talk about new trends and innovations.

"We have seven different breeds of cattle that are here for shows and sales," Executive Secretary for the West Virginia Cattlemen's Association Jim Bostic said.

For more information, visit the following URLs:
http://randolph.ext.wvu.edu/wv_beef_expo
<http://anr.ext.wvu.edu/events/wvbeefexpo>
<http://www.wboy.com/story/25227302/more-than-200-cattle-to-be-sold-at-beef-expo-2014>

What is an AgrAbility Farm Assessment?



WV AgrAbility offers free farm assessments to any farmer or family member who has difficulty doing any farm task, getting around his/her home and farm structures, or using equipment due to an injury or chronic condition. The purpose of a farm assessment is to allow WV AgrAbility staff to observe the farmer, the techniques the farmer uses to complete farm tasks, and the strategy the farmer uses to compensate for any difficulties he/she has. It helps staff to get a good understanding of the farmer's working conditions.

A typical farm assessment consists of the following steps:

- WV staff is contacted by a WV farmer or a family member.
- With the farmer's permission, a farm assessment is scheduled at the farm.
- WV staff travel to the farm. The farmer is asked questions about the farm, struggles, production, etc.
- WV staff observe the farmer while he/she performs difficult tasks and uses any AT modifications.
- WV staff offers suggestions for modifications and accommodations. Suggestions can range from rearranging work areas to modifying equipment.

For more information, visit the following URL:
<http://agrability.ext.wvu.edu/assistance/farm-assessment>

WV AgrAbility Calendar Highlights

WV AgrAbility Farm Visits and Presentations in April

—WV AgrAbility staff conducted a farm visit and assessment in Mineral County with the WV Department of Rehabilitation Services.

— A Barbour County farmer injured in a farm accident was visited in the hospital by WV AgrAbility staff.

—Students at the Romney Elementary School in Hampshire County had the opportunity to hear WV AgrAbility staff speak on ergonomic gardening techniques. Students learned how body mechanics and ergonomic tools made their recent pine tree planting job easier.



WVU Extension News



Ergonomic Gardening Presentation



Audience: Braxton County
Master Gardeners

On April 26, during the annual “Life’s a Garden — Dig It!” day, a presentation was given by WV AgrAbility staff to a group of Master Gardeners from Braxton County. The presentation focused on body mechanics and ergonomics, women farmers, and specific tools made for various body types and sizes. The information presented was designed to lead to making better choices for working more safely and efficiently.

The Braxton County Master Gardeners participate in a variety of volunteer activities, including landscaping at the Braxton County Memorial Hospital and other county events.

See more information at the following URL:
http://braxton.ext.wvu.edu/master_gardener

2014 Horse Evaluation Career Development Event

Audience: Team Contenders at
Potomac State College

The 2014 Horse Evaluation CDE was held on Saturday, April 26th at the Potomac State College in Keyser, WV. The mission of the event was to empower Agricultural and Extension Education majors for the choices and challenges of the 21st century. The top five winning teams were:

1. Tyler Consolidated High School 1099
2. Ripley High School 1093
3. Mineral County Technical School 1088
4. Spring Mills High School 1085
5. Buckhannon-Upshur High School 1081

See entire original article at the following URL:
<http://aged.wvu.edu/>

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